"cherished moments" column
Cathy L. Graham
County Extension Director
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The "Cherished Moments" column is written by Cathy L. Graham, County Extension Director with the Scotland County Center of the North Carolina Cooperative Extension. The following column will provide information to improve relationships between adults and children. "Cherished Moments" is dedicated to the many adults (parents, teachers, caregivers, volunteers, educators) who strive to grow and to the children who will surely benefit.

“A pint of example is worth a gallon of advice.”
-- Unknown

Balancing Your Child’s Schedule for School Success

Sometimes our children rush from school to soccer practice to karate. Sure, each of these activities can be a good thing on its own. But together, they may be too much of a good thing. The American Academy of Pediatrics says that children need “down time”. They suggest that play should remain a central part of childhood. There’s no question that children benefit from organized activities; but they need time to organize themselves as well.

Does your family’s schedule strike the right balance? Here are some things to think about:

- Recognize how important free play is to children. Build in time for your child to hang out with her friends, develop hobbies, read or just daydream. This unstructured time is when she exercises her body and her imagination.

- Take cues from your child. Does she love soccer? Or is she only on the team because the sport is important to you? Many families allow each child to choose one activity per season.

- Make family time a priority. If you feel like you only see your child while you’re in the car, rethink your schedule. The most important parenting jobs – listening, caring, guiding – need time to develop.

- Remember that school comes first. If your child does not start homework until after practice at 8:00 p.m., she could be overscheduled.

Source: The Parent Institute
**Fun Things To Do With Your Children**

- Have a family discussion. Everyone names 5 things which makes them thankful.

- Explore the Native American tradition of storytelling. Visit www.pbs.org/circleofstories/ for recordings of Native American stories and suggestions for activities to do with kids.

- Prepare a special skit or songs to perform for the guests at a holiday celebration.

- Louisa May Alcott, C.S. Lewis, and Mark Twain were all born in the month of November. Read books by these authors.

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